

# PAPER BALLOT COUNTING MANUAL

2012 Primary Election

Prepared by the Office of  
Ben Ysursa  
Secretary of State



# CONTENTS

---

- X – GUIDELINES FOR COUNTING PAPER BALLOTS ..... 3
  - Determining Voter's Intent ..... 3
  - Determining voter’s intent for paper ballot write-ins..... 4
    - Determining Voter's Intent for Write-In's ..... 4
- IX – TALLYING PROCEDURE ..... 7
  - Tallying in the Primary Election in Even Years ..... 7
    - Suggested assignments – counting board duties..... 7
    - Tally Procedure ..... 7
    - Tally Procedure - Paper Ballot - General Election .....Error! Bookmark not defined.



## X – GUIDELINES FOR COUNTING PAPER BALLOTS

---

Section 34-1203, Idaho Code, sets the statutory standards for counting ballots i.e., “Any ballot or part of a ballot from which it is impossible to determine the elector’s choice, shall be void and shall not be counted. When a ballot is sufficiently plain to determine therefrom a part of the voter’s intention, it shall be the duty of the judges to count such part.” Therefore, a ballot shall not be rejected for a technical error that does not make it impossible to determine the voter’s intent.

### DETERMINING VOTER'S INTENT

In determining the intent of the voter, the following principles apply:

1. **From face of ballot only.** Intent shall be ascertained only from the face of the ballot.
2. **Votes for too many candidates.** If a voter places a mark or writes in the names of more candidates for an office than are to be elected or nominated, the ballot is defective with respect only to that office. No vote shall be counted for any candidate for that office.
3. **Name written-in.** If a voter has written in the name of a declared write-in candidate, a vote shall be counted for that individual whether or not the voter makes a mark (X) in the square opposite the blank. Please note, a partisan tally of write-ins must be kept in the Primary Election for an individual whereas the write-ins for an individual in the General Election or in an Election in May or November in an odd year are cumulative. Remember only the write-ins for an individual who has filed a Declaration of Intent are to be checked for validity. The County Clerk will provide a list of such individuals. A declared write-in candidate written in for the wrong office shall not be counted.
4. **Mark out of place.** If a mark (X) is made out of its proper place, but so near a name or space as to indicate the voter’s intent, the vote shall be counted.
5. **Different marks.** Any mark evidencing the intent of the voter shall be counted.
6. **Attempted erasures or cross outs.** If the names of two candidates have been marked and an attempt has been made to erase or obliterate one of the marks, a vote shall be counted for the remaining marked candidate. If an attempt has been made to obliterate a write-in name, a vote shall be counted for the remaining name or marked candidate.
7. **Misspellings and abbreviations.** Misspellings or abbreviations of the names of write-in candidates shall be disregarded if the individual for whom the vote was intended can be ascertained from the ballot.

## **DETERMINING VOTER'S INTENT FOR PAPER BALLOT WRITE-INS.**

Pursuant to Section 34-702A, Idaho Code, no write-in vote for any office shall be counted unless a Declaration of Intent has been filed indicating that the person desires the office. Pursuant to Section 34-1203, Idaho Code, when a ballot is sufficiently plain to determine therefrom a part of the voter's intention, it shall be the duty of the judges to count the vote. The minimum threshold for determination of a write-in vote is the surname within the appropriate office.

### **DETERMINING VOTER'S INTENT FOR WRITE-IN'S**

The following guidelines are to assist in determining voter's intent for a declared write-in candidate.

- ▶ Voter has written in the complete name of the write-in candidate under the office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and marked the box to the right.

THIS VOTE SHOULD BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.

- ▶ Voter has written in only the surname of the write-in candidate under the office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and marked the box to the right.

THIS VOTE SHOULD BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.

- ▶ Voter has written in an abbreviation or common nickname of the candidate's first name and the surname of the write-in candidate under the office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and marked the box to the right.

THIS VOTE SHOULD BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.

- ▶ Voter has written in the complete name of the write-in candidate under the office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and did not make a mark in the box to the right.

THIS VOTE SHOULD BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.

- ▶ Voter has placed a pre-printed sticker with the candidate's name under the office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and did/or did not make a mark in the box to the right.

THIS VOTE SHOULD BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.

- ▶ Voter has written in the complete name of the write-in candidate under a different office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and marked the box to the right. Examples:
  - a. Candidate filed for County Commissioner for the first district and wrote the name under County Commissioner for the second district.
  - b. Candidate filed for State Representative, position A and the name was written-in under position B.

THIS VOTE SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.

- ▶ Voter has written in only the first name of the write-in candidate under the office the candidate has filed a Declaration of Intent for and marked the box to the right.

THIS VOTE SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED AS A VALID WRITE-IN VOTE.





## IX – TALLYING PROCEDURE

---

### TALLYING IN THE PRIMARY ELECTION IN EVEN YEARS

#### SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENTS – COUNTING BOARD DUTIES.

1. One (1) Reading Clerk to read the voted ballots.
2. One (1) Verification Clerk to watch that the ballots are read correctly.
3. Two (2) Tally Clerks to record the votes in the appropriate tally book.

#### TALLY PROCEDURE

1. Divide the voted ballots into separate stacks by party and place the green judicial ballots into a separate stack. (Each stack thus separated will be read and tallied separately.)
2. The Reading Clerk reads from the voted ballot the candidate's name after which the voter has placed a cross (X) or other mark sufficient to show the voter's intent. If a person votes by writing the name of a declared write-in candidate on the ballot under the appropriate office, such act shall constitute a vote for the person's name that appears, without the necessity of placing a mark in the box to the right of the name written on the ballot. (34-1203, I.C.) See Guidelines for counting paper ballots on page 31.
3. After calling each ballot, the Reading Clerk should lay it face down to distinguish it from the uncounted ballots. After the ballots are counted, the ballots should either be tied (by party) with string provided or bound with a paper clip or binder clip in sets or stacks of 20 or 25 ballots.
4. The two Tally Clerks will tally the vote in the appropriate Tally Books. For example, when Republican votes are tallied, each Tally Clerk will have charge of a Republican Tally Book (EP-4). Thus, each vote cast is tallied by two members of the counting board in each of the Republican Tally Books. The same procedure is applicable to other parties and the judicial Tally Book. (Judicial Tally Book EP-3, Republican Tally Book EP-4, Democrat Tally Book EP-5)
5. As the candidate's name is called by the Reading Clerk, each Clerk will place a short perpendicular Line opposite the name of the candidate voted for. Every fifth vote for the same candidate shall be recorded by a horizontal Line through the first four perpendicular lines. One of the Clerks should clearly announce the fifth tally as the tallying proceeds.

---

**NOTE:** It is extremely important that you identify where you were when you balanced each time a fifth tally is announced. It is suggested that upon the fifth tally for each candidate, one of the Tally Book Clerks announce the number of hash marks for each candidate. Each Tally Clerk should make a mark above the last hash mark for each candidate to indicate that you balanced at this point. The Reading Clerk should either turn the stack of counted ballots or move the stack of counted ballots to indicate that you balanced at this point.

---

The tally continues as long as the two Tally Clerks agree on the totals.

If there is any discrepancy, the cause must be identified and corrected before continuing with the tally.